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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October \_\_, 1988

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT.

On the first day of the current fiscal year, I signed into law the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1989 (P.L. 100-463). That Act provided \$27 million for limited humanitarian aid for the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance through March 31, 1989.

Congress will adjourn shortly for the year and its Members will disperse across America to their States and districts. The congressional adjournment presents a risk of some consequence to the safety of the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance. If the Government of Nicaragua attacks the Resistance, available assistance likely would not suffice to protect and sustain the Resistance until the new Administration and Congress are in a position to provide further assistance.

To ensure that the absence of Congress from the Nation's Capital does not give the Sandinistas a military advantage against the Resistance, I am serving notice that I intend to exercise my authority under Article II of the Constitution to convene the Congress in extraordinary session to consider emergency assistance to the freedom fighters if Nicaragua attacks them, or if such an attack is clearly imminent.

We will not permit the Sandinistas to exploit our customary congressional adjournment with an attempt to crush the Democratic Resistance. America must stand with those who fight for freedom in Nicaragua, as it has stood with the valiant freedom fighters in Afghanistan and Angola. As Americans prepare for the elections next month in our own country, we must remember that few people in the world enjoy the freedoms of democratic government that we enjoy.

We have an obligation to share the blessings of our liberty with those who yearn for freedom in Nicaragua. Their struggle is our struggle -- and together we can achieve democracy in Nicaragua.